

Message Text

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62

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P 042118Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6839

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 12018

EXDIS

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: MPOL CI PE

SUBJ: POTENTIAL PERUVIAN-CHILEAN HOSTILITIES OVER ARICA

REF: CARACAS 11892 (NOTAL)

1. RE PARA TEN REF(WHICH I DO NOT KNOW IF DEPT HAS REPEATED TO LIMA AND SANTIAGO), REAR ADMIRAL EMERSON, HEAD OF UNITAS XV, TELLS ME THAT THE CHILEAN MILITARY ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF A PERUVIAN PRE-EMPTIVE STRIKE ON ARICA. HIS OFFICERS ALSO ADD COMMENT THAT PERUVIAN SHIP RIDERS SEEMED EXCESSIVELY INTERESTED IN UNITAS CAPABILITIES AND PARTICULARLY THOSE OF US NAVAL UNITS.

2. ADMIRAL EMERSON SPECULATED THAT IF INDEED PERUVIANS WITH SOVIET EQUIPMENT SHOULD MAKE AN ATTACK ON ARICA, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE BASED ON PERUVIAN NAVAL STRENGTH. WHEN I ASKED IF CHILEAN AIR POWER WAS CONVENIENTLY LOCATED TO COUNTER SUCH AN ATTACK, HE SAID " YES". WHEN I ASKED A SECOND QUESTION, WHETHER THE PERUVIAN NAVY HAD AN AMPHIBIOUS SEA LIFT CAPABILITY. THE ADMIRAL SAID " NO". I SHOULD THEREFORE MUCH DOUBT IF PERUVIANS WILL RESUME THE WAR OF THE PACIFIC TO COMMEMORATE THE BATTLE OF AYACUCHO.

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